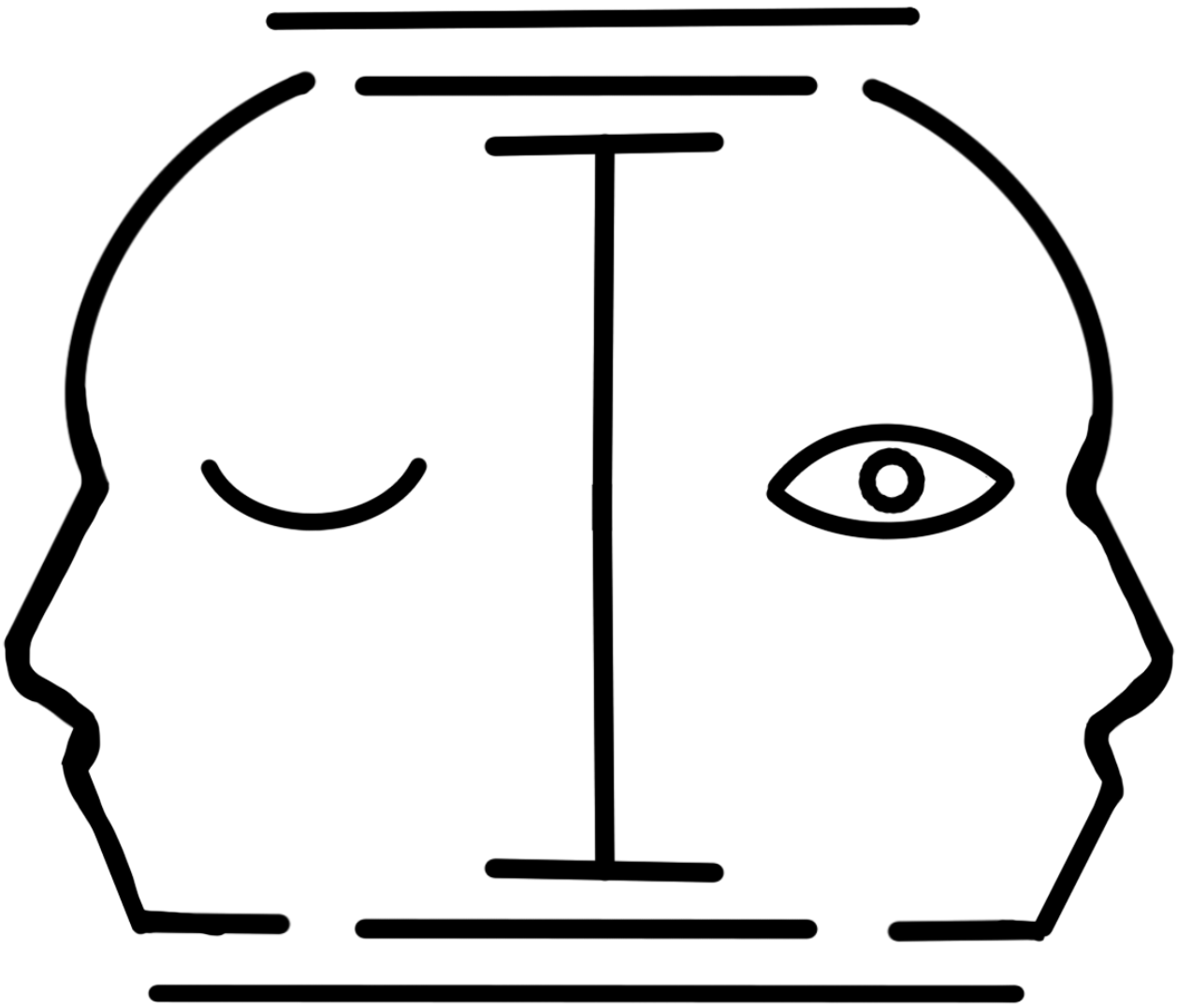

IMPOSTOR

A Poetry Journal

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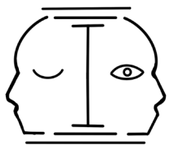
Volume 1, Issue 4
October 2021



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Impostor syndrome: the belief that talents and accomplishments are fraudulent or the result of luck.

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From the Editors

Welcome to Issue Four! We almost can't believe we've made it this far and couldn't have done so without the support of our readers, contributors, and anyone that has ever liked or shared our content. Thank you to all of you!

L.M. and Coral met in college in 2003 after a feminist magazine general interest meeting and bonded over a shared love of music and various strange things. We've been through the trials and tribulations of the literary world together for the last 18 years, often feeling like impostors ourselves, until L.M. told Coral that we should stop talking about starting a journal and actually do it. Thank you for coming on this journey with us. We believe strongly in the work we've chosen to feature in this issue (and all issues before this) and we hope you enjoy the work of 23 poets—our longest to date!

See you next time,
—L.M. and Coral

Our Mission

Impostor syndrome: the belief that talents and accomplishments are fraudulent or the result of luck.

Perhaps you've experienced it yourself—the editors certainly have. The literary world is rife with lofty and exclusionary definitions of what qualifies the title of "writer." When we decided to create this journal, we knew that first and foremost, we wanted to create a welcoming and encouraging space for writers who may feel intimidated by the established literary world or who feel as if their credentials—or lack thereof—don't fall in line with what's expected. We want you to submit regardless of your history. Age, academic background, or the length of your curriculum vitae hold no influence on our view of what constitutes a poet. Visit our website for more information on how to submit your work. Your voice matters, and we want to hear it.

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Dreams of My Foremothers
by Maya Alexandria

My foremothers spoke spells into my skin,
promising me a future they could never dream to live;
but it's hard to dream with a white man's breath on your neck
and his hand grasping treasures his eyes should never have seen.
When their *no's* and *don't's* delivered devotions to
an empty throne on high, they clawed for goddesshood
and ascended.
Divining scripture in his back, they crafted promises
of justice from ether and blood:
incanting through my creole cadence,
enchanting each strand of hair with a finger,
and speaking spells into my skin to strike down
the blasphemy before them.

Incognegro and against the white ego
I am their wildest dreams come alive:
a promise to be fulfilled.

the day i washed you out of my sweater
by Uriah Howard Allis

i let a week pass
before the scent grows
too pale a dose
of fantasy

your joke had been
far too serious
to take lightly:
"i see nothing sexy
about wearing lingerie,
but one of your sweaters…"

i press it,
still damp,
to my face
and breathe
the sterile trace
of an amputation

your smell
is now a word—
a ghost
of a ghost

patchouli

heartbr[ache]
by Uriah Howard Allis

grow old, die young
before your heart numbs
from heaving with laughter
        and caressing his cheek,
        your lipstick smearing
        his thumb

she has the suit and dress,
scarecrows on mannequins,
in her front lawn—
        no explanation needed
        that they were
        only worn once

(whether for a funeral
or wedding, proportioned bodies
wear lace, frills, and cologne's musk
        [always strongest when
        she kissed his cowlick]
with exquisite trust)

the young couple approaches
the sale, moving (casual-not-casual)
ever closer to the cloth and dust
        the woman appears
        wearing teeth that smile
        thinking, all the while,

they must like antiques

things i would like to try for a day
by Sloane Angelou

i would like to go to bed early just this once and wake up late / beside a lover or a dear friend just this once / i would like to stir love

i would like to read a book in silence with you present / we could imagine a porch with a calm sunset on a beach / i would like you to know your body reminds me of home

i would like to write this poem / i would like to imagine i have moved from not having you to having you / i would like to have tea while you have coffee or whatever we need

i need you
in fact i want you
actually i would like to have you
even if for a moment
or a lifetime
i would like to test the depths of your love
lust maybe an infatuation
who cares and why should it matter
what kind of mess we decide to make of ourselves
with bleeding hearts from cupid's arrow
why should a child determine what ways our hearts should break.

Fire Hazard
by Alison Calva

I recognize you from (a time before)
A time
Before death
Unrecalled today
From before
You knew
Fear of flying existed
Something beyond
The rush
Of mechanisms
Beyond your reason
Outside the oval window,
The sky is of
A pink (dream) haze hue
The sun caresses lush clouds,
Its light
Tinting their surface mauve
I'd like to stay here longer.
Far outside,
An electric war
Fought below black curls
I am not afraid
But marveled, maybe.
I think of fire
Lightning strikes the abandoned house
Around the corner,
The sight of a man completely on fire
I am awake
Almost by accident

A silent candle flickers
Threatens to ignite
A coffee table.
Golden light
Drips along the side
Of the curtain
(like liquid gold)
And I can
Almost taste
That pink hue haze
Can almost quietly
Touch you.

What to Bring to My Grave
by Ellen Clayton

(after Dani Woolley)

Those Nutella doughnuts we had in Italy
that halcyon summer as newlyweds
the scent of my babies when they were first born
a comfy chair so your back doesn't ache while you spend time by my side
two beers: a toast to us, a lifetime of love (it's ok if you drink both)
a story from your childhood (I didn't have time to hear them all)
that green suit that does it for me
your belly laugh (the one that makes you cry)
news of my siblings
a sea breeze
the story of when we first confessed our love
the book I read over and over
a poem I wrote for you, paper folded and crinkled from years in your pocket
open arms because I still see your heart –
don't close up.

Every Day I Panic
by Tam Eastley

The little mirror in my bathroom is tilted up
like the heads of Berliners in spring. And
at least once a day there is a moment when my heart pumps fast
like I've sent a text message to the wrong person.
The sort of message where I reveal everything about myself
to my boss
or to my mom.
Or I accidentally send a picture of the fleshy part of my knee and it looks like my butt.
And I have to delete it quickly, hoping they didn't see,
because what could be worse than a maybe-butt to your boss?

I'll wonder if I am a vampire now,
like Angel or Spike. Or maybe Nosferatu.
But my memories of him are foggy like
the boat he rolled in on and my opinions of him could certainly not fill a library.
Or a multi-season podcast.

And then I'll remember that my boyfriend is tall and I am short.
Not just *can-I-help-you-get-that-plate* short
but *oh-sorry-I-hope-I-didn't-offend-you-by-calling-you-short* short.
But also sometimes *oh-my-god-you're-short-too!* short.
Because in this world that's not made for me, people come in two sizes:
taller than me and new best friend.

So I'll tilt the mirror back down and lean in close,
inspecting my eyebrows I've forgotten to pluck
and my earring holes that sink like oatmeal bubbles,
and I'll tell myself I'm still here.
Or at least not invisible like I thought.

Letting Go
by Ilyssa Goldsmith

When I say I'm letting go
it doesn't mean I'm forgetting the time and place
nor the pain it provoked within me

It means that healing is when I chose
not to pick at the scab
with an ill disregard for patience

It means that I do not rewrite the story
in my head every day, living in a fantasy supercut
of isolated moments

It means that the past is no longer a dark avenue
I stroll down at midnight alone without a soul in sight

It means that I do not scorn you or rue a day which no
longer exists if only in my mind

It means that I do not fantasize a mundane moment
and pinpoint the moment when everything

fell
apart.

It means I accept it for what it really was—
a single day with lunch
a pastry and a well-meaning conversation

When I say I'm letting go
it doesn't mean that I hate you
or rue the day you were born
or even that I ran away and hid from
your pensive face to protect myself
(which I did)

It means this and only this:
I forgive you and I do not pick at the scab.

This time I leave it alone.

What is it About Two Little Ears—
by Melissa Greenwood

Fashioned with batter and love,
by hand and without symmetry—
that can completely undo me
to this day?

What is it about the way you sliced bananas
and stirred in chocolate chips
and let me lick the bowl and spoon,
that leaves me feeling wistful?

What is it about the memory of those pancakes—
from the sweet smell that suffused our home
to the sizzle of the griddle—
that fills me with the kind of warmth
only rivaled by the hot butter between stacks?

Despite your long, tired face
and your hard, calloused feet—
you flipped the script
on weekend mornings, Mom:
serving us flapjacks the Debbie-way:
with Mickey Mouse ears,
real syrup,
and a smile.

I First Dated a Boy Who
by Jade Hidle

Was four years older
And not a virgin
And whose kisses were wet
And fingers strong.

He called me on the phone
With the cord I twirled around
My own fingers, but
I was in the shower
Because in a house where shoes are left at the door,
You rinse off the day before you sleep
in the bed that was worked for, just for you.

My hair still wet,
My mother came to me.
He talk too sweet,
She said. Her brow
Was furrowed but
The corners of her mouth
Were smiling.

I Dated Another Guy Who
by Jade Hidle

Announced that his bucket list included
2) Date an Asian girl
14) Date a white girl

Isn't she the best of both worlds?
His friend asked, hitchhiking
His thumb at me.

My guy crinkled his nose
And shook his head
No.

Shakespeare
by J.A. Holm

After Jen Bervin's Nets

Erasure of Shakespeare's sonnets 112, 39, 92

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all the world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stoppèd are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
You are so strongly in my purpose bred
That all the world besides methinks are dead.
O, how thy worth with manners may I sing
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring,
And what is 't but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this let us divided live
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,

And that thou teachest how to make one twain
By praising him here who doth hence remain.
But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assurèd mine,
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs
When in the least of them my life hath end;
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humor doth depend.
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O, what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessèd-fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

Mary
by Eva Jasper

Family portrait.
Ugly girls are painted
in grey shades,
no matter how much red they dress in,
how much skin
they bargain for.

Birthday.
Rashly, screaming
pink.
The boy you like
kisses your best friend
as you cut the cake.
Blow out your candles,
make your wish.

Wedding day.
A dream in white,
all eyes on you,
for that precious, precious
once.
Spared loneliness,
proven your point,
you have the rest of your life
to make up for it.

Manifestation
by Alisan Keesee

I remember the first time I learned about manifestation.
A friend told me all about *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.
I had nightmares afterward and to comfort me she said,
Thinking about things is more likely to make them happen.

Yet for the next few years, I shuddered whenever I saw an Elm Street.
I refused to wear red and green together.
I continued to suffer from nightmares
wondering if one may finally kill me.

At 13, I sat in my grandmother's car during my agoraphobic summer.
I was scared of living and dying.
My brain, in an attempt to comfort me, would say things like
As long as this song doesn't come on the radio, you'll make it out alive.

A few times, that song would come on the radio.
And every hair stood straight up, my spine at acute attention.
No, no, I didn't mean it. I'm not going to die.
Breathe.

I'M NOT GOING TO DIE!
I yelled until my thoughts became hoarse.
The tires crunched the gravel of the driveway.

And I Would
by R. Skye Lambert

And I would have a thick squashy scarf around my neck
and I would wear a marigold sweater
and the smell of the air would be buttery
and the texture of the air would be crunchy
and I would walk into a crumbling brick coffee house, strung with bulb lights and cobwebs
and I would order from a barista with thick glasses and lilac hair
a caramel macchiato that would be served to me in a ceramic mug with a black cat on the side
greeting the rim with cream fluff
and I would sit on a weathered couch in the corner towards the door
pull my legs over the side, stretch and cross them in front of me
sip heat with a notebook open across my lap
stare out the window at raindrops bouncing like popcorn off shiny cracked pavement
and wish the door would open

and there you would be

Excerpts from **SCARLET**
by Francesco Levato

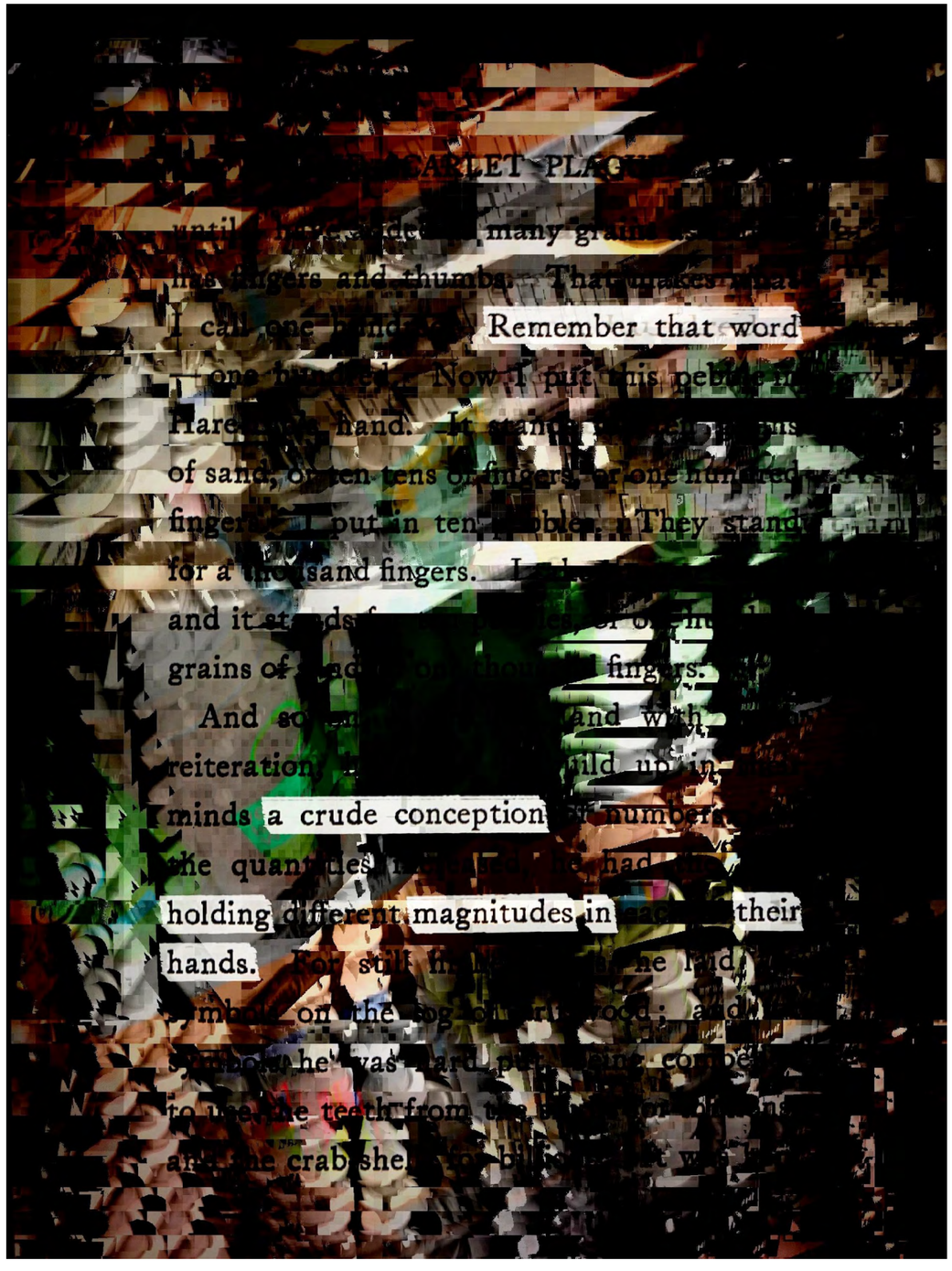
SCARLET is a digital visual/poetic meditation on the fractured state of psyche induced by extended social isolation under COVID-19 lockdown.

The digital/visual poems are created through erasure of the novel *The Scarlet Plague* collaged with glitched imagery from everyday life in lockdown. The titles of poems in the series are then derived from objects contained in each glitched still life.

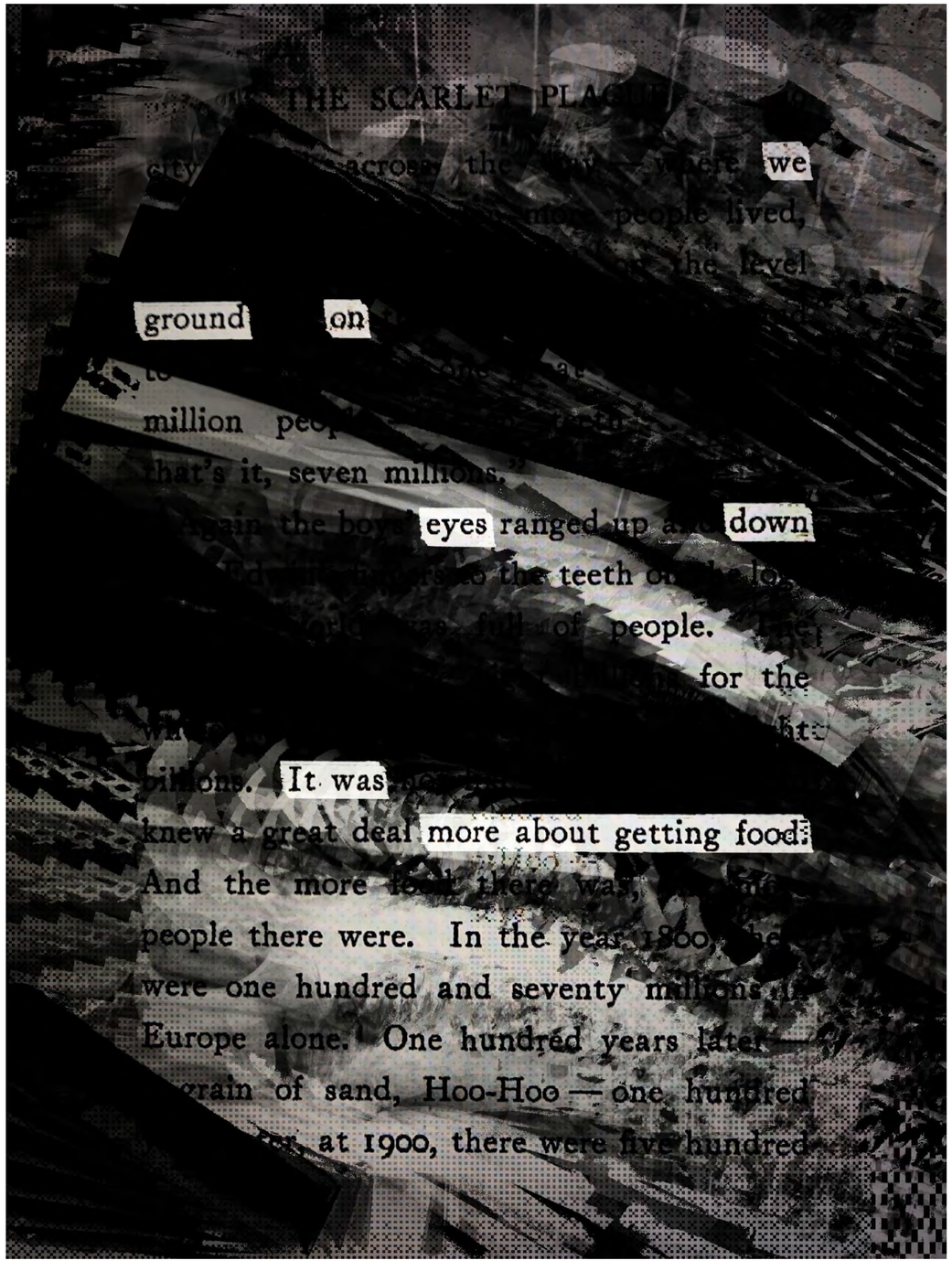
Glitching is a technique that introduces errors into the code of a digital file or stream that distorts its presentation. The error-induced fracturing of images in *SCARLET* is intended to defamiliarize everyday objects and surroundings to reflect the state of a pandemic self in forced confinement.

The Scarlet Plague is a post-apocalyptic novel by Jack London, published in 1912, set in California during the year 2073, after the world's population is decimated by an uncontrollable pandemic.

Cabinet with Hand Sanitizer & Alcohol Wipes
by Francesco Levato



Refrigerator with Cup, Near Empty
by Francesco Levato


ground on
eyes ranged up and down
It was
knew a great deal more about getting food.
And the more food there was,
people there were. In the year 1800,
were one hundred and seventy millions
Europe alone. One hundred years later
at 1900, there were five hundred

wet mouth
by Kelly McKay

Side effects include: Respiratory
catastrophe. Anorgasmia. A loss
for words. Spasmic dancing and dead
eyes at work. Atrophy. Voyeurism.
For auld lang syne. Far away thoughts hard
to hold. Caulked up heart holes. Creaky
hinges. Being afraid. Buyer's remorse.
Kicking and screaming. Clocking in and
clocking out. Hands at your sides. Single
file line. Shoes tied too tight. Getting better.
Getting worse. Getting some. Going
under going on and keeping going.
The good outweighs the bad and
with dry palms we shake on it.

A CHILD DECIDES HE WANTS TO BE KING
by Eugene O'Hare

i am 7 but i think in pictures
older than caves. when snow moves
like crumpled notes falling onto the prison yard
i can feel that movement in my head somewhere.
talking like this, the way i talk, makes me strange.
my father wonders if i am gay. he says i'm too young
to know what it means but i guess it's about love
and the pain of love.

one day i will ask my father if he loves me
but i shall wait until i am king;
dressed in heavy gowns made by the people.
i'll have my father summoned to the court.
perhaps he will think it silly to bow to me.
i will ask him if he loves me before sending him to the tower
with unbuttered bread and a stone jug of milk.

tomorrow there will be rain. i am so thin
i sometimes get lost in it.
people lose me in rain.
when i am king i will never be lost
or lose myself as i sometimes do in sad thoughts.
all sadness will be banished by decree.
i will paint my face like my mother's
and tell the people to be kind to animals.

my father will die at the top of the tower.
it will be known as Father's Room.
the tourists with their little back packs
will visit in groups of four
and eat sandwiches where my father's body stopped.

Larry Calls Me A Teenager for the Third Time This Morning

by Danielle Estelle Ramsay

I am wearing dress clothes, a clerical collar.
To be the only female pastor in a meeting of clergy
is not just to be underrepresented.
It is to be infantilized. The other pastors order things that
are not on the diner's menu. I am always on the menu.
My competence — a frog on a seventh grader's desk
waiting to be dissected. As I pass out the agenda for
our next event, they marvel at my organization. *I went to
graduate school to do this job*, I don't remind them. A teenager
would talk back. I never talk back. I bite my tongue so hard
it bleeds. All over the table. No one notices.

14 ways to play hide & seek sleep (& avoid nightmares)

by Jen Schneider

1. palm & pocket platters of lukewarm potato (mashed) & pâté (smashed)
2. apply balm of vanilla (tubed) and cafe latte (tombed)
3. peak under quilted covers of checkered gingham and navy plaid fleece
4. sneak over (then abandon) quarreling lovers of checkered pasts and wavy futures
5. cover curious collections of rainbow glass trinkets that taunt
6. reveal calming collections of foggy glass thimbles that flaunt
7. track futures. trick pasts. avoid counting trucks.
8. snack on antioxidant-rich letters of A. E, I, O & U (especially IOUs)
9. snitch on casual forgetters
10. stock nutrient-rich letters of B, C (calcium), M (magnesium), & D
11. stir favored recollections flavored of county fairies (caramel corn & cotton candy)
12. dispel & dispose (cuisinart / dyson / ____) recollections peppered of county jails (congealed corn & expired candy)
13. count. ships of many seas. sheep of many wools. shoes of many heels. hinges of many histories. heal. inhale. exhale. heal. inhale. exhale.
14. discount. recount. metabolic meters of mainstream metrics. wrap arms around/over/of limbs tight. avoid light. avoid cliches. sleep tight. good night.

Coming Home to You
by Cyrine Sinti

I hated you so very much.
You, who was most damaged by our ordeal
Was so cruelly rejected by me and neglected.
I could barely think about you,
Let alone touch you.

I remember wanting to carve you out.
Make myself protected,
Impenetrable.
I blamed you.
For being so weak and easily broken into.

I blamed you for everything.
Because of you
I'm not given equality in this world.
My Mother's drops of Indian Gypsy blood made it bad enough
But You, You made it worse.

You did your part too
In this feud.
You fought back each month
With blood.
Even before this happened.

But after our traumatic event
You and your fury fucked me up even more
Cramps, clots, careless.
You didn't give me any peace
Forcing me to face you each month so painfully.

It's nature isn't it?
Each month, letting me know You're there
Funny because it's nature that brought us back together.
You and I.
Desire.

Is there anything more natural than desire?
Wanting. Curiosity. Lust.
Wanting yourself seems forbidden.
Presumptuous and indulgent.
But isn't nature all of those things?
Apples ending Eden.
Feelings ending our distance.
I touched You out of love for the first time in an age.

Now, I feel you
I see you
I share you
I love you.
You're my special place — my private space,
My flower of flesh.

The Dig
by Mantas Stockus

Her eyes search for a clue in the black fabric. Something she missed today, guiding the shovel towards the empty soil. A tiny hint that will steady the ship of unhappy investors. But the night is firm, keeping together the unknown and offering nothing except the cold, waiting for the fire in the stove to die. Not a single whisper comes from the tight grip of darkness. Hope remains the size of the cup of tea she holds in her hands. The scent of mist fills the shack made to store tools more than as a place to sleep. But she prefers this way, her way. The best time to begin is after the dew as it softens the ground, allowing the shovel to cut through the rich soil. The sun will rise soon. Her left ankle twitches.

I Don’t Know
by Rachel Tanner

I almost slipped on a patch of ice tonight
as I was letting the dogs out. I felt my feet
go out from under me and for a split second.
I imagined my head smacking the deck
with such force, such sound, that you
came rushing out to help me.

I imagined a present where
I could count on you.

I came back inside and you were already
fast asleep in bed—covered up in blankets
I’d worked so hard to earn. Breathing
breath that didn’t belong to you. I wonder
what would’ve happened had I actually
slipped on the slick.

I bow my head, seal my heart,

and sigh myself to sleep.

Candied Violence

by Brittney Uecker

June's brother committed suicide when we were in the fourth grade.
Her desk was empty. Another girl turned
towards me, a knowing smirk on her face. *June's brother killed himself.*
He's dead, she made sure to clarify.
He was older than us. I didn't know him.
But I knew to cry. *I just feel so sorry for June*,
I said through hot tears erupting,
through the lump in my throat that roiled my tiny belly with dread.

No one knew why he did it.
There has to be a reason, for someone so young. How could a child
even know of such a concept,
such a cosmic loophole?
When adults kill themselves, we can empathize.
The reason loses specificity. Life gets heavy, accumulates and we crumble
under its weight. Was he just an old soul,
bearing the weight of the world early?
Should I be so afraid of junior high?

June showed up for a birthday party
the weekend before it happened.
Sleeping bag tucked under her arm
her dad's hand on her back as she approached the door.
Oh, sweetheart, said the mom on the third ring of the doorbell,
The party isn't until next weekend. You mixed up the dates.
Simple mistake.
By next weekend, the party would be canceled.
There would be no frosting-sweet sleepover squeals,
only the haunting realization that childhood is fallible.

June came back to school
after the necessary amount of time.
After the minimal distance had been established.
That morning, I made my mom take me to the supermarket
So I could buy her a tube of Shock Tarts.
Remember those? Little cloyingly sweet disks that left sores on your tongue.
Back then, the trend was maximized flavors,
masochistic candied violence. Blasts and shocks and Warheads.
She ate them right there at her desk — the teacher allowed it.
She chewed silently, sweet pain blasting through her mouth.
We never talked about it.

June came back to school,
And asked me to follow her out to the cemetery behind the school parish
where a lump of fresh dirt blanketed her brother's body
where a savings account's worth of headstone cast its long shadow
where a fourth-grader should be doing nothing more than chasing ghosts.
She touched the granite with tiny gentle fingers,
traced his birthday, his truncated life.
She didn't offer an explanation,
and I didn't offer a condolence.
We were fourth-graders.
We never talked about it.

Decades later,
when my husband's cousin killed himself,
when my mother-in-law got the call,
slack-jawed and gasping in our living room
I thought of June,
Shock Tarts,
candied violence,
the cosmic loophole.

Telling it Like it Is
by Ben Walker

It came as a surprise, didn't it?
More at yourselves than anything else.
The way things had been going,
getting harder all the time.

Tough times call for tough people, you said,
and they're tough. Tough on the people they need to be tough on,
and tough on themselves.

Accountability. The willingness to learn from mistakes.
The hand up instead of the handout.
If you give a go, you get a go.

We needed to be ready, you said, *but I didn't think it would come to it so soon*.
Always the tone of surprise. Think of the property values,
up again, seven years in a row.
There are people who'd kill to live like us,
and of course it's a wonderful idea, but we have to think of the message it sends.

In times like these, Brits can't have room for doubt;
A home's a castle, walls to keep them out.

Contributors

Maya Alexandria is a biracial African American writer, painter, poet, and filmmaker in California. She graduated from the University of California, Davis in 2020 with a degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She is the Chief Marketing Officer and Producer of Mad Mouth Poetry Inc., a poetry coalition based in California that focuses on uplifting the voices of underrepresented poets. She has been published in a variety of magazines from *The Parklander Magazine* to *RiskPress*, and has had her poetry taught in the classroom at San Mateo Community College. Maya is currently studying film at NYU while working on poetry and prose projects. She looks for ways to dismantle the patriarchy in her spare time by painting outdoors, listening to jazz with her cat, and slaying dragons via video games.

Uriah Howard Allis, a queer twenty-one-year-old poet and nursing student from rural Western New York, has found pieces of his heart, mind, and soul escaping to the blank page ever since he could hold a pencil. He is the winner of the Alfred C. O'Connell Library's 20th Student Poetry Content (2021). His poetry has been published by or is forthcoming from *Active Muse*, *Ice Lolly Review*, *Eclipse Magazine*, *Moss Puppy Magazine*, and *Intangible Magazine*. You can follow his journey on Instagram @uriahallis or https://uriahallis.wixsite.com/my-site.

Sloane Angelou is a storyteller & writer of West African origin; passionate about learning of human existence by interrogating human experiences. They exist in liminal spaces.

Alison Calva (Mexico City, 1995) is a poet, artist and translator. Her poem "Habibi" was published in *Revista Fusado* and her

short story "Martillos al doblar la esquina" was published in *Revista Plástico*. She endeavors in textile art with embroidered pieces and is currently exploring analogue photography.

Ellen Clayton is from Suffolk, England where she lives with her husband and three young children. She's recently been published in *Delicate Friend*, *Corporeal* and *Honeyfire*, amongst others. She has poems forthcoming in various publications including *Nightingale and Sparrow*, *Gutslut Press* and *Cauldron Anthology*. Her poetry can be found on Instagram @ellen_writes_ poems and she's on Twitter @el_clayton.

Tam Eastley (she/her) is a writer and web developer based in Berlin. She is currently editing her way through her first novel, and has recently been published in *Fusion Fragment*, *CP Quarterly*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Visual Verse*, and *The Wild Word*. Together with her sister, she runs *ongoing*, a prompt journal for music and prose. When she's not writing, you can find her cross stitching, reading on the balcony, or going for various hikes around Berlin. She can be found online here: tamwrites.space.

Ilyssa Goldsmith graduated from Arizona State University with a bachelor's in communication. She enjoys writing poetry, which sounds out the space where the muse, myth, and female desire reside. Ilyssa is passionate about exploring the nature of the repressed female psyche within her poetry. She believes language can be utilized as a tool for discovery, healing, and recovery. Ilyssa keeps a dog-eared copy of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* close to her bed and is known to recite her favorite lines to anyone who will listen on a daily basis. *Goodbye (Hello)* is her first poetry collection.

Melissa Greenwood, who writes both CNF and poetry, has an MFA in creative nonfiction writing from Antioch University Los Angeles. She has been published—both under her real and pen name—in *Brevity*; *Lunch Ticket; Annotation Nation*; *The Los Angeles Review*; the *Los Angeles Review of Books*; *Meow Meow Pow Pow*, where her flash piece was nominated for a best small fiction award; the *Pup Pup Blog*; *The Manifest-Station*; *Poke*; *Neuro Logical*; *The Erozine*; *Moment Mag*; *Sledgehammer Lit*; *Screenshot Lit*; *Pink Plastic House*; and forthcoming in *HOOT's Cookbook Anthology* and *Potato Soup Journal*. She lives in LA with her Canadian husband and—when she's not reading, writing, or singing—teaches and practices Pilates. Fun fact: Her semi-retired caterer mother (the subject of the above poem) is sometimes even a student in her classes, working off the chocolate chip pancakes of yore.

Jade Hidle (she/her/hers) is the proud Vietnamese-Irish-Norwegian daughter of a refugee. Her travel memoir, *The Return to Viet Nam*, was published by Transcurrent Press in 2016, and her work has also been featured in *Michigan Quarterly Review: Mixtape*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Witness Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *The West Trade Review*, *Bangalore Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *New Delta Review*, and the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network's diacritics.org. You can follow her work at www.jadehidle.com or on Instagram @ jadethidle.

J.A. Holm is a poet from small-town Pennsylvania. He earned his A.A. from the Community College of Philadelphia and is currently a senior studying Creative Writing at Bucknell University. His writing appears in *Toho Journal* as well as in his debut chapbook *Self Self* published by Toho Publishing. He currently lives in Lewisburg, PA.

Eva Jasper lives and writes in the north of England, where old and wonderfully strange things live.

Alisan Keesee is a 24-year-old Seattle-based writer who lives alone with her cat. Originally from a small, unincorporated Washington town, she has a penchant for boybands, black coffee, and true crime. A graduate of Western Washington University, Alisan works in an office like many college graduates in their twenties.

R. Skye Lambert is a social worker at a hospital in New England, serving clientele with pervasive mental health diagnoses. Skye is also a musician and songwriter. You can find her on Twitter at @rskyelambert. She is probably weirder than you.

Francesco Levato is a poet, a literary translator, and a new media artist. Recent books include *Arsenal/Sin Documentos*; *Endless, Beautiful, Exact*; *Elegy for Dead Languages*; *War Rug*; *Creaturing* (as translator); and the chapbooks *A Continuum of Force* and *jettison/collapse*. He has collaborated and performed with various composers, including Philip Glass, and his cinépoetry has been exhibited in galleries and featured at film festivals in Berlin, Chicago, New York, and elsewhere. He holds an MFA in Poetry, a PhD in English Studies, and is currently an Associate Professor of Literature & Writing Studies at California State University San Marcos.

kelly mccay lives in the philly area. she is a painter and a poet, and a proud member of the proletariat. You can find her work in *Voicemail Poems* and *Ariadne Mag*.

Eugene O'Hare is an author based in London. His plays are published by Methuen.

Danielle Estelle Ramsay (she/her) is a queer, biracial, poet from the Pacific Northwest. Her work encompasses a variety of topics, but focuses particularly on the intersection of mental health and queer issues with religion and the church. She lives in Walla Walla, Washington with her spouse, daughter, and their array of pets. She works as a United Methodist pastor, and can usually be found drinking tea, embroidering swear words, or watching anime.

Jen Schneider is an educator who lives, writes, and works in small spaces throughout Pennsylvania. She is a Best of the Net nominee, with stories, poems, and essays published in a wide variety of literary and scholarly journals. She is the author of *Invisible Ink* (order at Toho Pub), *On Daily Puzzles: (Un)locking Invisibility* (forthcoming, Moonstone Press), and *Blindfolds, Bruises, and Breakups* (forthcoming, Atmosphere Press).

Cyrine Sinti is a Writer and Dancer. She loves sharing her German and Gypsy cultures through fiction. Cyrine has been published in *Crepe & Penn*, *Periwinkle Lit Mag*, *Analogies & Allegories Lit Mag*, *Poetically Magazine*, *Walled City Journal*, *Small Leaf Press*, and others. She can be found under any full moon, or online @CyrineSinti.

Mantas Stockus is a Malta-based Lithuanian. He has MA in Modern-and-Contemporary Literature and Criticism and is particularly interested in thought-provoking writing and poetry. His writing has appeared in various print and digital publications.

Rachel Tanner is a queer, disabled writer from Alabama whose work has recently appeared in *Tenderness Lit*, *Wine Cellar Press*, and elsewhere. She has a monthly videogame writing column in *Videodame* and she tweets @rickit.

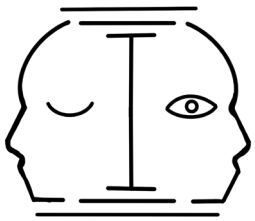
Brittney Uecker lives in rural Montana. Her work has been published by *HAD*, *Taco Bell Quarterly*, *Fever Dream Magazine*, and others, and she is a Best of the Net nominee for fiction. She is @bonesandbeer on Twitter and Instagram.

Ben Walker lives in Southampton and is an enthusiastic amateur poet. They're working through some stuff, but they're going to be OK. Find them on Instagram at @benhaspictures, or on Twitter at @BenHasOpinions. They do not currently have any published collections, but are working frantically to remedy this.

Editors

L.M. Camiolo is a writer and editor originally from New York and currently based in Philadelphia. She is a former poetry editor for *Toho Journal* and her work has appeared in *antonym*, *FEED*, *Doghouse*, and elsewhere. She is editor of *DARK ENTRIES*, a journal for dark speculative poetry. She also co-hosts a podcast, Let's Talk About Snacks. You can find her on Instagram @shoresofpluto.

Hailing from rural Western New York, **Coral O'Leary** is a lake-effect snow ex-pat, current New Yorker, queer poet, cultural worker, and asexual aromantic-spectrum lesbian. Her Pushcart Prize-nominated work has appeared in *Minnow Literary Magazine*, *Baby Teeth Journal*, *SORTES*, and other publications. She is currently working on her first chapbook, *Love Poems for Friends*. Coral can be found on Instagram @ohcoralpoetry or www.coraloleary.com.



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